



Document F: Appeal Statement

After reviewing the recommendation from the Shelby County Schools Charter School Office to reject the Freedom Preparatory Academy charter application for the Binghampton neighborhood, and the subsequent Shelby County School Board vote to deny the Freedom Preparatory Academy charter application, we base our appeal to the State Board of Education for Tennessee in three focus areas outlined by Shelby County Schools as the rationale for denial.

Focus Area One: “Per SCS Board Policy #1011, Section IX, B.2 (b) – “A charter school operator that operates two or more charter schools or campuses will have its request for charter school replication recommended to the Board for approval if (1) each of the operator’s schools or campuses has a current composite score of 3.5 or better in each of the three core components of the Performance Accountability Framework....{or} if all but one of the operator’s schools or campuses has a current ..score of 3.5 or better.” At present, FPA has three schools with academic data, only one of which is at/above the 3.5 threshold for academics. As a result, FPA does not meet the standard for replication laid out by the SCS Board.” (see: Document B, Page 2-3)

Freedom Preparatory Academy Charter Schools’ Response: The Shelby County Schools Charter School Office states “FPA has three schools with academic data, only one of which is at/above the 3.5 threshold for academics.” There were only two schools listed on the SCS Charter Annual Report from the 2017-18 school year (school 8234 and school 8155). The 2018-19 school year data has been released by the Tennessee Department of Education (TDOE) but we do not have access to the SCS Charter Annual Report from the 2018-19 school year to confirm the academic scores of our schools. The 2018-19 data will include information for school 8234, school 8155, and school 8355.

That said, the following is true of the academic data for Freedom Preparatory Academy schools:

- School 8234 is Freedom Preparatory Academy, which serves grades 6-12. School 8234 earned 4.75 out of 5.00, exceeding the 3.5 threshold in the SCS Charter Annual Report for 2017-18. In 2018-19, this campus was a TVAAS Composite Level 5 again, improved their 6th - 8th grade mathematics results from roughly 17 percent to roughly 33 percent of students performing on grade level according to the TNReady assessment suite and this school improved English I results by 14 percent (the largest jump in Shelby County Schools of any charter or traditional school).
- School 8155 is Freedom Preparatory Academy Elementary School, which serves grades K-5. School 8155 earned 2.25 out of 5.00, below the 3.5 threshold in the SCS Charter Annual Report for 2017-18. This was School 8155’s first year of testing high-stakes assessment grade levels with students who did not experience the Freedom Preparatory Academy lower elementary school academic program. In spite of this, thanks to strong classroom instruction and remediation/intervention, the school earned a TVAAS Composite Level 5. In 2018-19, School 8155 earned a TVAAS 3 and improved their 3rd - 5th grade mathematics results from 11 percent to 21 percent of students performing on grade level according to the TNReady assessment. This gain in mathematics proficiency outpaced 86% of schools across the State of Tennessee.



- School 8355 had its first year of academic data in 2018-19. The school earned a TVAAS 5 composite score.
- The third school referenced in the Shelby County Schools Charter School Office feedback may have been school 8075 of district 985 (Achievement School District). This school, Westwood Elementary School, has been managed by Freedom Preparatory Academy since 2014-15. This campus improved the percent of students performing on grade level in mathematics from roughly 11 percent to 22 percent and in reading from roughly 6 percent to 12 percent since the 2016-17 school year (first year of the new TNReady assessment), with fewer students in the “Below” category for reading in 2018-19 than any other ASD school. School 8075 earned a TVAAS 3 composite score in 2017-18 and 2018-19. This school has also risen from the bottom one percent of schools in the state of Tennessee to the 14th percentile, being recognized as the only school in the Achievement School District above the tenth percentile of schools in the state of Tennessee after the 2018-19 school year.

Focus Area Two: “The application still fails to discuss how it plans to replicate a school that has yet to open, why the Binghampton neighborhood is a good fit for the network, and why it is opening a new school now within that community. Per SCS Board Policy #1011, Section VI, B. 5 – “the district shall consider whether the establishment of a proposed charter school in a particular geographic location of the LEA is feasible or will create oversaturation in the proposed geographic location.” According to the most recent strategic regional analysis, the Binghampton/White Station community has a current student capacity of 2,792 with 3,513 in K-8; this means the Binghampton/White Station community needs 721 seats, mostly in the White Station neighborhood of the Binghampton/White Station community. Though Freedom Preparatory Academy addresses why they have selected the neighborhood based off of seats needed they did not address why Binghampton is a strategic fit for the organization in a new community outside of the neighborhood of their existing schools.” (see: Document B, Page 2)

Freedom Preparatory Academy Charter Schools’ Response: Freedom Preparatory Academy Charter Schools selected the Binghampton community as the location for this proposed charter school in an attempt to meet the needs of Shelby County Schools as articulated by the “SCS Regional Seats Analysis” published on February 8, 2019 (one week after the Letter of Intent for this charter application was submitted) and to ensure quality seats are available to all children. Freedom Preparatory Academy outperforms the only school of choice in Binghampton in the eighth grade (exit grade), as noted in the first and amended charter applications, showing that students matriculating through a Freedom Prep school would be an academically beneficial school option for the families of Binghampton.

Freedom Preparatory Academy is committed to growing, as we see the success of students in our schools while also seeing that far too many of our students’ peers in Memphis attend schools that fail them academically and culturally. While other states frequently contact Freedom Preparatory Academy in the hopes of Freedom Preparatory Academy opening more schools outside of Tennessee, it is Freedom Preparatory Academy’s preference to continue serving the many families of Shelby County who would choose for their child to attend a Freedom Preparatory Academy school. In addition to the need for additional K-8 seats, the Binghampton community was selected due to the similar demographic to the Westwood & Whitehaven communities, where Freedom Preparatory Academy has successfully operated schools for 10 years.



Proposing a school of 900 students in a neighborhood with 721 more students than available seats is an appropriate proposal, and 900 students is a number that supports the financial and programmatic operation of the proposed school. Additionally, Freedom Preparatory Academy has a high degree of confidence in its ability to maintain healthy enrollment given this difference of 179 seats in Shelby County Schools' analysis. Currently, all of Freedom Preparatory Academy's schools (Elementary, Middle and High) in the Westwood & Whitehaven communities are either fully enrolled or overenrolled, with waitlists remaining in several grade levels across our schools. The SCS Regional Seats Analysis suggests there are more seats than there are students in Westwood & Whitehaven at the Elementary, Middle and High School Levels. In Westwood, the analysis indicates an extra 113 Elementary School seats, an extra 313 Middle School seats and an extra 1,142 High School seats. In Whitehaven, the analysis indicates an extra 170 Elementary School seats, an extra 926 Middle School seats and an extra 217 High School seats. Given Freedom Preparatory Academy's ability to fully enroll multiple campuses in these neighborhoods where there are more seats available than there are students, Freedom Preparatory Academy, again, has a high degree of confidence in fully enrolling a school in a neighborhood where there are more students than seats available.

Focus Area Three: "There is still no compelling argument for Freedom Preparatory Academy expanding right now, with schools that remain to be fully realized, or even opened, including the charter that this immediate application seeks to replicate." (see: Document B, Page 2)

Freedom Preparatory Academy Charter Schools' Response:

There is no law or policy, to Freedom Preparatory Academy's knowledge, preventing a charter school in Tennessee from replicating an approved charter whose opening has been deferred, and while this application is a replication of that K-8 charter, the data outlined above in Focus Area One and in the charter application itself makes clear Freedom Preparatory Academy's demonstrated track record of success operating both Elementary and Middle Schools in Shelby County.

Additionally, Freedom Preparatory Academy has been in talks with both Shelby County Schools, the Achievement School District, and the Tennessee Department of Education regarding whether the approved unopened SCS charter will need to be utilized by Freedom Preparatory Academy to transition our ASD Elementary School to SCS authorization. Therefore, as has been made clear through those talks and through the amended charter application, Freedom Preparatory Academy is seeking to open Freedom Preparatory Academy - Binghamton Campus as a K-8 campus including Freedom Preparatory Academy's third Elementary and Middle Schools, while maintaining the opportunity to transition our ASD Elementary School to SCS authorization if and when such a move is agreeable to all parties (including the Tennessee Department of Education).